

CATEGORY:	ORGANIZATIONAL – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
SUB-CATEGORY:	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
GROUP:	
DISTRIBUTION:	ALL EMPLOYEES / PHYSICIANS
TITLE:	FAXING INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To outline employees’/physicians’ responsibilities when faxing personal information / personal health information.

POLICY

It is the responsibility of all employees/physicians of Western Health to ensure that the privacy, confidentiality and security of personal information / personal health information (see definitions following the procedure) of patients/clients/residents and their families is maintained at all times. Western Health is also committed to providing quality, accessible care in an efficient manner.

All employees/physicians have a responsibility to ensure that they transmit information via fax in accordance with the document *Guidelines for Faxing Information* using the organization’s *Facsimile Transmission Sheet*.

If a fax is sent in error, employees/physicians must notify their manager / leader immediately. The manager / leader must notify the Regional Manager, Information Access and Privacy / Privacy Analyst. In these situations, the [Privacy Breach Protocol policy \(9-03-10\)](#) must also be consulted and followed. All breaches of confidentiality will be treated as an occurrence in accordance with the [Occurrence Reporting policy \(6-02-15\)](#) and an *Occurrence Report* form (12 - 900) must be completed.

Breaches of client/patient/resident confidentiality that result from misdirected or inappropriate faxing of personal or sensitive information will be shared with the affected clients/patients/residents as per the [Disclosure of Occurrences policy \(6-02-16\)](#).

Any misuse, inappropriate release, inappropriate access, or failure to safeguard information may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment / contract for service.

Managers must ensure that employees of Western Health who are responsible for faxing personal information / personal health information:

1. Transmit information via fax in accordance with the document *Guidelines for Faxing Information* using the organization's *Facsimile Transmission Sheet*.
2. Post the *Guidelines for Faxing Information* next to the fax machine in their respective work area for easy reference.
3. Program into the fax machine in their respective program area/department/unit the name and fax number of the program area/department/unit

DEFINITIONS

Personal information – Information of an identifiable individual, but does not include the name, title, business address / telephone number of a staff member of an organization.

Personal health information – Personal information with respect to an individual, living or deceased, and includes:

- Information concerning the physical or mental health of the individual
- Information concerning any health service provided to the individual
- Information concerning the donation by the individual of any body part of any bodily substance by the individual
- Information derived from the testing or examination of a body part of bodily substance of the individual
- Information that is collected incidentally to the provision of health services to the individual

Guidelines for Faxing Information

As stated in the *Faxing Information* policy, please adhere to the following guidelines when faxing personal information:

- Fax only personal information that is specifically requested and immediately necessary for continuity of care. Send other urgent information by hand.
- Fax only the personal information which you would feel comfortable discussing over the telephone.
- Consider making one individual responsible for the fax machine. Otherwise, limit the chances that passers-by can see personal documents by sending the documents yourself. Arrange a time to receive faxes containing personal information so you can be at the machine as they arrive.
- Before sending a fax, check that the receiver's number is correct, and then verify in the machine's display window that you have keyed it in correctly. Where feasible and appropriate, pre-program fax numbers (into your fax machine) that have already been tested for accuracy.
- Always confirm that the receiver has taken appropriate precautions to prevent anyone else from seeing the faxed documents.
- Call the recipient to verify that he or she received the complete transmission with the number of pages completed.
- If you send a fax in error, immediately notify your manager/leader who notifies the Regional Manager, Information Access and Privacy / Privacy Analyst.
- If you receive a fax in error, notify the sender immediately.
- Any fax machine used to send or receive personal information should be kept in a closed area to prevent unauthorized persons from seeing the documents.
- If you must send personal information, always complete the fax cover sheet (included in this policy), clearly identifying both sender and intended receiver. The cover sheet should include a warning that the information is intended for the named recipient only, as well as a request to contact you if the transmission was misdirected.
- If you are sending personal information by a fax modem (a fax device contained in a computer), confirm that other users of the computer system cannot get access to the fax without a password. Likewise, if you are expecting information by fax modem, ensure that other users of your system cannot access the information without a password.
- If your fax machine is equipped, use the feature requiring the receiver to enter a password before the machine will print the fax. This ensures that only the intended receiver can retrieve the document. Similarly, ask the sender to make sure that you must supply a password to retrieve the document.

What should I do if someone asks me to fax his or her own personal (health) information?

- Explain how faxing personal information can result in it being accidentally disclosed or deliberately intercepted by other people. Explain the risks and the precautions you have taken to reduce the risks. Ensure the person consented before you fax personal information.

REFERENCES

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Record Association website at:

<http://www.nlhra.nf.ca>

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada website at:

http://www.priv.gc.ca/fs-fi/02_05_d_04_e.cfm

KEY WORDS

Faxing, faxing personal health information, faxing information

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FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO:

Name: _____

Location: _____

Fax: _____

From: _____

Location: _____

Telephone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Comments: _____

Signature

Total Number of Pages: _____
(including cover sheet)

CONFIDENTIALITY WARNING

The document accompanying this transmission contains information intended for a specific individual and purpose. The information is private. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution or the taking of any action to the contents of this telecopied information is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately by telephone at the above-noted number and forward to us by return mail at the above-noted address.